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THE INFLUENCE OF
ANGLO-FRENCH PRONUNCIATION
UPON
MODERN ENGLISH.

BY
THE REV. PROF. W. W. SKEAT.

[Reprinted from the PHILOLOGICAL SOCIETY'S TRANSACTIONS, 1901.]

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THE INFLUENCE OF ANGLO-FRENCH PRONUNCIATION UPON MODERN ENGLISH.

By the Rev. Professor W. W. SKEAT.

[*Read at the Anniversary Meeting of the Society on May 3, 1901.*]

IN some remarks upon "The Proverbs of Alfred," printed in the Phil. Soc. Trans. for 1895-8, p. 399, I endeavoured to draw attention to certain curious peculiarities of spelling to be found in some MSS., particularly of the thirteenth century, and I showed that they can all be accounted for by the simple supposition that the scribes who wrote them were trained in Norman schools, and were more accustomed to the pronunciation of Anglo-French than to the true English sounds of the words which they were trying to write down. I cannot find that much use has yet been made of this discovery, except by myself. However, I am now prepared to go very much further, and to say that students of Middle English will have to recognize the *practical* side of the principles which I have laid down. For there is a great deal more in it than might be supposed. It has now become quite clear to me that the Norman pronunciation did, in many cases, overpower and divert the native pronunciation of native words; and this influence has to be reckoned with in a very much larger number of instances than any scholar has hitherto suspected. Indeed, I find in it an easy answer to a great many peculiarities of pronunciation that seem, at first sight, to contradict the usual phonetic laws.

In order to make the chief points clearer, I have drawn up a list of sixteen canons, showing in what respects a Norman would naturally vary from an Englishman in matters of pronunciation. These I have reprinted, and renumbered, in an article entitled "Observations of some peculiarities of Anglo-French Spelling," which appears at p 471 of my "Notes on English Etymology," to be published by the Clarendon Press in the present year; and they are briefly recapitulated below, at p. 25, followed by a list of early texts in which A.F. spellings occur. I do not say that these

canons are exhaustive, but they refer to the more important points of difference between French and English; and I shall therefore refer to these, by number, for the student's convenience.

Surely it is worthy of notice that *sal* for *shal* (shall) occurs freely in *non*-Northumbrian texts, such as the Bestiary, the Proverbs of Alfred, and even in the Old Kentish Sermons!

Perhaps one clear example of what I am aiming at will show at once the full force of the argument. If we open Dr. Furnivall's splendid Six-text edition of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales, we can hardly fail to be struck by the oddity of the spelling of the Cambridge MS. So obvious are its eccentricities, that Dr. Furnivall himself, in his Temporary Preface, written as long ago as in 1868, drew particular attention to them, and enumerated some of them. Amongst other things, he says, with perfect truth:—"The square scribe—as we may call the one who wrote most of the MS.—had evidently a great fancy (1) for swallowing *els* and *tees*; and (2) the guttural *gh* and *g*, with an *n* and *d* once; (3) for putting *oes* for *aes*, *ees*, and *us*; (7) this scribe used *t*, *th*, *d*, and other flats and sharps in a noteworthy way; (9) prefixed *s* to initial *ch*; (10) used *w* for *v*, and *v* for *w*; (12) he wrote some odd forms. Whether these peculiarities are Midland or Northern, or some Midland and some Northern, I must settle in the footnotes, and now only collect instances of them."

If we turn to these footnotes, we find, practically, that they settle nothing definitely, beyond establishing that some peculiarities are Northern, which is correct. The right clue was not really in hand. Footnote No. 3 on p. 52 says: "*Figten* is Midland; see Genesis and Exodus, l. 3227." Footnote No. 2 on p. 56 says: "Cp. *then* for *ten*; see Genesis, p. 94, l. 3305; *leð* for *let*, p. 95, l. 3348; *herðe* for *herte*, p. 81, l. 2856"; with other similar remarks in notes 1, 3, and 5 on p. 57, where further references to Genesis are given. The right answer is, that *figten* is no mark of Midland at all, but a sure mark of Anglo-French influence; and I have already shown, in my article on the "Proverbs," p. 412, that Genesis and Exodus is precisely one of the texts which bear traces of the handiwork of a Norman scribe. In like manner, the Cambridge MS., above considered, belongs to the same class, or is much to be suspected of doing so. With this clue, let us apply some of my sixteen canons,¹ and see how they

¹ They were chiefly drawn up from MSS. of the *thirteenth* century, so that they are only partially applicable to MSS. of so late a date as 1400.

work. I quote the Cambridge MS. as 'C,' and take only such examples as occur in the "Temporary Preface," pp. 51-59.

Canon 4. "The English *wh*, as in modern Northern English, became a mere *w*. They wrote *wat* for *what*."

Compare Dr. Furnivall's remark—"h is left out in *wieh*, 2361; put-in in *whilhom*, 2384, 2403"; p. 59. Just so; it was put in by complete confusion.

Canon 2. "Old French had no initial sound of *sh*."

Compare—"We find an *s* prefixed to the initial *ch* in 195 *schyn*, chin; 475 *schaunce*, chance," etc.; p. 57. That is to say, the scribe confuses the sound of *sh* with that of *ch*. Dr. Furnivall instances similar forms from the Anturs of Arthur, in the West-Midland dialect; referring to the Camden Society's edition. But the Anturs of Arthur, in the very third stanza, has the characteristic Anglo-French *hurl* for *erl*, and *hernestely* for *earnestly* (Canon 1). It is no sure mark of West-Midland, this putting of *sh* (*sch*) for *ch*.

In Canons 14 and 15, I show that Normans wrote *th* for final *t*, and conversely; and I explain this. I add that "we even find *thown* for *town*."

Compare—"We have also *t* for *th* in 2098 *Atenys* (Athens); 2981 *To* (tho, i.e. then); 3041 *pynkyt* (thinketh). But *th* for *t* in 1078 *blenche* (blent); 2185 *abouthe* (about)," etc.

At p. 52, we read that C. omits the *t* in *parlemen*, 1306. This agrees with Canon 12, which points out a similar omission of *d* in *lond* (after an *n*).

Canon 9. "The sound *ght* was most difficult for Norman scribes. *Ght* sometimes becomes *wt* or *t*."

Compare Dr. Furnivall's remark on p. 53—"In 505 *outho*, ought; 604, *sleythe*, sleight; 1214, *cauth*, caught, *ght* is represented by *the* or *th*." That is to say, the scribe wrote *outho* (with *th* for *t*), as already noted; and by this *oute* (as it should have been) he meant *oughte* with *gh* suppressed. Just so.

It is hardly worth while to go on. It may suffice to say that the spelling of C. can be completely accounted for, if we are careful to add the fact of its containing Anglo-French spellings to the other facts which concern the dialect only.

The importance of the above remarks lies in this. If we wish to compare a MS. showing strong Anglo-French peculiarities with others of the same date and contents, it is sometimes convenient to compare this MS. C. with the first four native English MSS. which are printed side by side with it. It doubtless contains

dialectal peculiarities *as well*; but for these we can make separate allowance. The Lansdowne MS. is much the worst, and is a little risky; but the A.F. marks in it are very few; as, e.g., *strenkethe* for *strength*, 84; *weppe* for *wepte*, 148; *werde* for *werlde*, 176; *hoistre* for *oistre*, 182; etc. However, the comparison is more curious than instructive; the MS. is too late to be relied upon for A.F. peculiarities.

Having said thus much about Anglo-French spelling, by way of introduction, I wish to draw special attention to the much more important fact, affecting even our modern pronunciation of common words, that Anglo-French pronunciation actually diverted, in some instances, the true sounds of native words. Surely this is somewhat serious; and the more so when we consider that our dictionaries take no notice of the fact; at least, I can call to mind no special instance in which this has been done.

By way of a clear example of what I mean, I would cite the modern English *fiddle*. The A.S. and early M.E. form was invariably *fithel*; but the *th* was, to the Norman, a difficult sound (see p. 29 below), and the obvious way of avoiding it was to turn the voiced *th* (*dh*) into the voiced *d*, as in the O.F. *guider*, to guide. The result was the late M.E. *fidel*, of which the earliest example cited in the N.E.D. is dated 1450; the accompanying verb *fidelin* occurring in 1440. Langland has both the sb. *fithel* and the verb *fithelen*; Chaucer has the sb. only, in his famous Prologue, l. 296. If we now turn to the Six-text edition, it is interesting to find that MS. C., the only one which is strongly marked by Anglo-French peculiarities, is the only one that spells the word with a *d*. The spelling is *fedele*, showing at the same time that the scribe had not quite caught the true sound of the short *i*. The Lansdowne MS. has the extraordinary form *phēpel*, which is marked by the French use of *ph* for *f*, and of short *e* for short *i*; yet it shows the correct English sound of the middle consonant.

The action of Norman pronunciation on English was sporadic and uncertain, affecting some words, and not others; or else affecting some words more than others. In some cases the effect was only transient or partial. Consider, for example, the words *feather* and *fathom*. These might, in like manner, have become *fedder* and *faddom*; and we have clear evidence that such pronunciations were once in use. The M.E. *fether* occurs in Chaucer, C.T., A 2144; and, if we turn to the Six-text, we shall again find that MS. C. has *fedyr*, whilst all the rest have *th*. And this form

feder very nearly became established, as the N.E.D. gives instances of it in Langland and Lydgate, and even in the works of Bishop Fisher. The form *fathom* had a much narrower escape of being superseded. We find the form *fædm* as early as in Ælfric's Glossary, so that it was once an English dialectal variation; but, after the Conquest, it became fairly common, being naturally preferred by Norman speakers. The N.E.D. gives examples from the Cursor Mundi, King Alisaunder, and the prose Merlin; and the verb *fadmen* occurs in Havelok, which abounds with A.F. spellings. In the Chaucer MSS., the *d*-form is clearly preferred; thus in C.T., A 2916, the first five MSS. have *fadme*, and only the Lansdowne MS. has *fathome*. However, in F 1060, the forms are equally divided; the first three MSS. have the spelling with *d*, and the last three have the spelling with *th*. In the Rom. Rose, 1393, the Glasgow MS. has *fadoms*. The N.E.D. quotes the form with *d* from Shakespeare's *Tempest*, *Winter's Tale*, and *Othello*, and from Harrison's *England*! The E.D.D. shows that it is still common in Northumbrian and East Anglian; so that we have here an instance of a case in which the Midland and Southern form *fathom* has maintained its ground against the combined influence of Northumbrian and Anglo-French. At the same time, I feel quite justified in drawing the inference, that the influence of Anglo-French should always be considered, just as we consider that of Northumbrian. It is only in this way that apparent exceptions to phonetic laws can be rightly understood.

I have taken the above case of the word *fiddle* because it well illustrates my position. But it is by no means an important one. The frequent inability of the Norman to pronounce *th*, though clearly exhibited in a majority of our thirteenth-century MSS., was nevertheless, for the most part, temporary. In course of time, the Norman learnt his lesson, and could pronounce both the voiced and voiceless *th* as well as any native. I may, however, quote a few more examples of the reduction of *th* to *d*, viz.: *afford*, from A.S. *geforthian*; *burden*, for *burthen* (influenced by *burden* of a song, from F. *bourdon*), *murder*, for *murther*; and the common word *could*, from M.E. *couth*.¹

It is of much more importance to take the case of a sound which the Norman wholly failed to achieve, and which is consequently

¹ It is curious to find that, in Chaucer, Prol. 713, MS. C. has the Northern form *couth*, pronounced as *coude*, and rhyming with *loude*, where all the rest have *coude*. For *morder*, *morthering*, see C.T., A 2001.

obsolete, viz., the sound of the A.S. final guttural in such words as *fāh*, a foe, *bōh*, a bough, and *tōh*, tough. These words are considered, one by one, in my "Principles of English Etymology," series 1, § 333, and are well known. But somewhat more still remains to be said.

That the Normans recognized the sound, and tried to represent it in writing, is clear; for they invented the symbol *gh* for this very purpose. But when they came to sound it, they found it none too easy. Two courses were open to them: (1) to ignore it, and (2) to imitate it by substitution. If the vowel in the word were long, the weight (so to speak) of the syllable fell more upon the vowel than the consonant, and the word might still be easily recognized, even if the pronunciation of the *gh* was extremely slight. This explains many forms at once, viz., *bough*, *dough*, *plough*, *slough*, *though*, *high*, *nigh*, *sigh*, *thigh*, *neigh*, *weigh*; and to these we may of course add such words as *borough* and *thorough*, in which the syllables containing the *gh* are wholly unstressed and are of small consequence; as well as *sloe* (A.S. *slāh*), *foe* (A.S. *fāh*), in which the final guttural is not even written. The treatment of the A.S. prep. *purh* is most instructive; for it split into three distinct forms. The attempt to pronounce the final *h* after the *r* produced the M.E. *thurw*, *thoruh*, *thoru*, Mod.E. *thorough*, where the indeterminate final vowel is all that is left of the guttural, but it serves the turn; and it is highly interesting to observe that the modern spelling occurs in MS. C. alone, in C.T., A 920, where the other MSS. have the more uncompromising spellings *thurgh* and *thorgh*, which only some of the community could rightly pronounce. Some speakers, however, actually transposed the *r* so as to bring it next to the *th*-, thus producing the form *thruh*, which occurs in an early thirteenth-century Southern MS., strongly marked with A.F. spellings, in Reliq. Antiq., i. 102. This form had no chance of preservation, and something had to be done with it. The majority hit upon the happy expedient of lengthening the vowel, which weakened the final guttural and allowed it to be gradually and quietly dropped; and this is the origin of the modern E. *through*, in which the *ou* represents the lengthened *u* and the *gh* remains as a mere ornament, admirable to the eye, but ignored by the ear. The minority who had not the wit to lengthen the vowel were driven to find a substitute for the *gh*, and the nearest recognizable sound being that of *f*, they produced the form *thruf* or *thruff*, a form which is still common in our dialects; see, e.g., the

Lincolnshire and Whitby Glossaries. We thus see that the A.S. *þruh* actually produced no less than *three* forms, viz., *thorough*, *through*, and *thruff*,¹ two of which are in literary use; and all because some means had to be used to get rid of the A.S. final *h*. I do not deny that the same result might possibly have been produced by mere dialectal variation; but it seems to me that the fixed determination of the Normans to learn English made such changes imperative and inevitable; and it is unscientific to neglect an influence so potent and yet so subtle. Phonetic laws are of no use to us unless we consider *all* the influences that in some way or other affect them. We have thus seen that the easiest way of preserving a final M.E. *gh* after a short vowel was to exchange it for *f*. This accounts for a number of words in which the vowel was originally short, such as *cough*, *laugh*, *trough*, and others in which it was deemed, for some reason or other, highly advisable to preserve the *f*-sound, such as *chough*, *enough*, *hough*, *rough*, *tough*. In these five last instances the use of the *f* rendered the vowel-length unnecessary, and the vowels were actually shortened, because the words were otherwise recognizable. Similarly, some dialects have *duff* for *dough*.

The same exchange of A.S. final *h* or *g*, M.E. *gh*, for *f*, occurs also after a consonant, in the case of E. *dwarf*, from A.S. *dweorh* or *dweorg*, as noted in the N.E.D.

A curious point, and not (I think) much observed, is that the A.S. final *h* could be represented by the substitution of *k*, as well as of *f*, in cases in which the said *h* was preceded by a consonant. Thus the A.S. *beorgan*, to protect, is represented by *bargh-* or *barf-* in the prov. E. *bargham* or *barfam*, a horse-collar (E.D.D.); but these are not the only forms. A Norman who could not sound *bergh-* or *bargh-* was at liberty to substitute either *barf-* or *bark-*; in fact, *bark-* is the better imitation of the two; and this is why we find such forms as *barkham* and *barkum* in some Northern dialects. Precisely the same substitution appears in some place-names. Thus Bartlow in Cambs. was spelt *Berklow* in the time of Fuller; and this *berk* is merely an A.F. pronunciation of A.S. *beorh*. Such a substitution, which phonetically is by no means a bad one, becomes still easier to understand when we remember that the form *berk* was already familiar to the Norman from its

¹ Also *thurf*, as in "*thurf* our louerd's grace"; Early English Poems, ed. Furnivall, p. 35, l. 15.

occurrence in the common word *hauberk*, not to mention *scauberk*, whence our modern *scabbard*. And when once we understand that *k* was a legitimate A.F. substitute for the troublesome M.E. *gh*, I can see no difficulty at all in the derivation of E. *elk* from the A.S. *elĥ* (*eolĥ*). For let us put ourselves in the Norman's place. He has made up his mind to get rid of the final guttural, and he has the word *elĥ* to deal with. What is he to do? He cannot drop the guttural and lengthen the vowel, because that would have given the form *eel*; and the form *eel* was already appropriated. Neither can he substitute *f*, because that would have given *elf*; and once more, the form *elf* was already appropriated. There was therefore only one course left, viz. to turn it into *elk*; and this, accordingly, he did. Mr. Wyld, in his valuable article on Guttural Sounds in English (Phil. Soc. Trans., 1899, p. 253), notes that in the co. Down a seal is called a *selk*, from A.S. *seolĥ*; and he thinks that Mr. Bradley's theory as to the borrowing of *elk* from the Continent is not needed. Mr. Wyld himself suggests that *elk* and *selk* "represent the O.E. forms, and that the *k* in both cases arose before an open consonant, either in a compound, or in the sentence." It will be understood that I even go a step further than he does, and consider his theory, in these two particular instances, to be equally needless; since I account for the forms *elk* and *selk* in precisely the same way as I account for *dwarf* and *rough* and *tough*, and all the rest, viz. by a deliberate substitution of *k* for the A.S. *h* (M.E. *gh*) by a speaker who was resolved that he would avoid that sound. When Mr. Bradley says that *elk* is not the normal phonetic representation of A.S. *elĥ*, I perfectly agree with him; it was deliberately invented in order to avoid such normal representation. And, on the other hand, I think it quite needless to search, as Mr. Wyld has done, for the compound word *elk-sedge* in order to account for the simple *elk*, or for the compound word *seolhwæd* in order to account for the simple *selk*. In fact, I go back to my original question, viz., how is it even possible to represent the A.S. *eolĥ* (O. Merc. *elĥ*) in modern English by any other form than *elk*? If we ought not to say *elk*, what ought we to say? Neither *eel* nor *elf* are admissible, and I can see no other alternatives but *ellow* and *elly*, which are much worse representatives of the original form.

At the same time, I have no objection to Mr. Wyld's explanation of the provincial *heckfor*, a heifer. He explains this by saying that the M.E. *gh* in *heigh* became a *k* (*ck*) before a following *f*.

But he omits to say that a change of *some* sort had necessarily to be made. Another method of avoiding the *gh*, as I have shown, was to put *f* for it, or else to drop it out altogether. My own belief is that the substitution of *f* for *gh* was actually adopted; so that *heighfer* became *heiffer*, which almost immediately shortened the *ei* to *e*, and produced the modern form which we pronounce as *heffer*, in agreement with a spelling which occurs in 1507. For the very numerous old forms, see the N.E.D.

I have treated these words *elk* and *selk* at some length, because, if I am right, the consequences of my theory are far-reaching. Mr. Wyld's chief point, in his excellent article, is to show that the old notion as to the universality of Northern *k*-sounds and *g*-sounds as contrasted with Southern *ch*-sounds and *j*-sounds is contradicted in many special and undeniable instances. All the same, I hold that the prevalence of hard sounds in the North and palatalized sounds in the South is true to a certain extent, and is to be expected. But we have to take into account another factor as well, viz. the influence of Anglo-French, and the peculiar results which must often follow from the desire to avoid certain sounds and to substitute others. And this is the more important, because it affected ALL the dialects, and must have conflicted with the habits of one dialect in one respect, but with those of another dialect in some other respect; the result of which would be precisely what we find, viz., alterations which, to all appearance, are capricious, fitful, and sporadic. My view is, accordingly, that every O.E. sound should be considered separately (1) as to its regular development; (2) as to the influence on that development of any given dialect; and (3) as to the effect of arbitrary substitutions such as a French-speaking Englishman would be inclined to make and to impose upon his inferiors. All these considerations suggest complexity and some uncertainty in the final modern results; and such complexity and uncertainty are precisely what we find. This is a proposition which will, I think, be readily admitted.

I here offer the opinion, for what it is worth, that Anglo-French affected the Southern dialects most, and the Northern dialects least. At any rate, this agrees with the facts as to their respective vocabularies. In this respect, we must pay no regard to such words as *asheet*, a plate, and *jigot*, a leg of mutton, in the vocabulary of modern Edinburgh; for they are later borrowings from Continental French, and have no connexion with the Norman period.

Another very interesting word which once had the final A.S. *h* is the word *hough*, from A.S. *hōh*; for which see the N.E.D.

If anyone were to ask me, what is the regular phonetic development of this A.S. *hōh*, I should at once say that it had no regular development at all in the strict sense. On the contrary, it was modified by A.F. influence, and such modification produced not *one* result merely, but no less than *three*. And really, it is easy enough. Given the A.S. *hōh*, and given the imperative necessity of getting rid of the final guttural, what is to be done? There are three tolerably obvious answers.

(1) The easiest way is to get rid of the guttural immediately. The dat. *hōge* became *hōwe* (developed like M.E. *grōwe*, I grow); so that the modern sound is *hoe*. See *Hoe*, sb. (1), with the sense of 'promontory,' in the N.E.D.

(2) A.S. *hōh* gave the M.E. forms *hogh*, *hough*, just as *tōh* gave *togh* and *tough*. Hence the modern spelling *hough*, pronounced as *huff*. See *Hough* in the N.E.D. The sound *f* (*ff*) arose from deliberate substitution of *f* for *gh*, and this shortened the vowel, as in *rough* and *tough*. Dr. Murray decides that the shortening really arose in the compound form *hōh-sinu*, in order to explain the Scotch *hock*. This supposition is probably correct under the circumstances; but would not have been necessary if the English form had to be explained alone.

(3) A third method was to turn the final *h* into a *k*, as I have already explained. If, in addition, the vowel were shortened, we should get the form *hock*. See *Hock*, sb. (2), in the N.E.D. The vowel-shortening (and, perhaps, in this instance the *k*-sound) almost certainly arose in the compound *hōh-sinu*, *hock-sinew*, which appears as *hockschin* in P. Plowm. Crede, l. 426, and originated the curious verb to *hox*,¹ to hamstring, or to hough.

It thus appears that the A.S. *hōh* produced the modern forms *hoe*, *hough*, and *hock*, all three; not by regular phonetic development, but because that development was diverted, in no less than three directions, by the influence of the requirements of the Normans who were learning English.

It will obviously be convenient to have a special name for these non-phonetic (but imitative) developments, and the name which

¹ *hs* or *ghs* easily becomes *x*: cf. *next* from *negh'st*, and M.E. *next* from *hegh'st*; M.E. *thū list*, thou liest. The extraordinary form *hexist*, highest, occurs in Early Eng. Poems, p. 60, ll. 8, 10.

I propose is 'diverted' development; in order to express the fact that the speakers intentionally diverted or altered the sounds, in order to produce forms which they liked better. I should say, for example, that the 'diverted' developments of the A.S. *hōh* are represented in modern English by two distinct forms, viz. *hough* and *hock*; *hoe* (from the dative) being regular.

In order to drive home the lesson the better, I will take another case in which another A.S. word is again represented in later English by three developments, two being diverted. Two of them are obsolete, and the third is now only dialectal; but this is accidental, and does not affect the principle. It is most interesting to find that all three developments are exactly parallel to the former. The word selected is the A.S. *healh*, O. Mercian *halh*, a nook or corner.

(1) In the first development, the dative case *heale*, O. Merc. *hale*, was taken, which had the great merit of having lost its guttural even in A.S. Hence the M.E. *hale*, a nook, in l. 2 of the Owl and Nightingale; see *Hale*, sb. (2), in the N.E.D.

(2) The O. Merc. nom. *halh* was treated as if it were French. The Normans turned *halbero* into *hauberc*, with *au* for *al*; and in the same way the form *halh* gave the M.E. *haugh*, still in dialectal use, meaning 'a nook of land beside a stream'; see *Haugh* in the N.E.D. Dr. Murray calls it "a phonetic descendant" of *halh*, but it is only "phonetic" if we extend the use of the word—as, indeed, I think we should—so as to include Norman influence.

(3) The only other way of treating the word was to turn the final *h* into *k*; and this is obviously the origin of the Chaucerian word *halke*, a nook or corner; see *Halke* in the N.E.D. Of this word, Dr. Murray says: "Perhaps a diminutive of O.E. *halh*, *healh*"; but this is precisely the point which I do not grant. It is not a diminutive at all, but the word itself. It is precisely parallel to *elk* and *selk*, as discussed above.

As this point has been so little understood, I will take yet another instance. We have already seen that *dwarf* is a diverted development of the A.S. *dwerg* or *dwerh*. But it is obviously not the only possible development. If the final guttural, instead of being exchanged for *f*, were exchanged for *k*, we should obtain the remarkable form *dwerk*. The point is, of course, that this strange form is actually found, and the N.E.D. duly notes it, and gives the right reference, viz. to Lybeaus Disconus, ed. Ritson, l. 481; to which I beg leave to add that it occurs again in ll. 121, 203, 403,

451, 556, 608, 748, 770, 1005, 1080, 1210, 1658, 1666 ; or at least fourteen times. The same copy of the poem, at l. 138, has *fydele*, spelt with a *d* ; and even, at l. 117, the form *nodyng*, meaning 'nothing.'

Another case in which the A.S. final *rh* was exchanged for *rk* occurs in the surname *Burks*. Mr. Bardsley quotes *Hubert de Burk* and *John de Burk* from the Hundred Rolls ; and explains *burk* from A.S. *burh*, which I take to be correct. If so, the A.S. *burh* has developed three forms, viz., *burgh*, *borough*, and *Burke* ; besides which we have the form *Bury* as a place-name, from the dative case *byrig*.

In fact, the habit of substituting *k* for the guttural *ch* is still perfectly common. Ask any Englishman who knows no language but his own to say "Loch Lomond," and he will call it "Lock Lomond" as a matter of course. The wine called *hock* was formerly called *hockamore* ; and what is *hockamore* but *Hochheimer* ?

The accumulation of instances helps to establish the theory. The change from A.S. *colh* to M.E. *elk* by no means stands alone as an instance of diverted development. Other examples are *selk*, a seal, from A.S. *seolh* ; prov. E. *barkham*, a horse-collar, from A.S. *beorgan* ; *heckfor*, a heifer, from A.S. *hēahfore* ; *hock*, from A.S. *hōh* ; *lock*, from Gaelic *loch* ; *hock*, from G. *Hochheimer* ; M.E. *halke*, a corner, from O. Merc. *halh* ; M.E. *dwerk*, a dwarf, from O. Merc. *dwerh* ; and the surname *Burke*, M.E. *Burk*, from A.S. *burh*. These give us nine more instances, and perhaps further research may reveal one or two more.¹ The important point is the acquisition of a new principle.

I now pass on to consider some other sounds.

The A.S. final *ht* can soon be dismissed. When it was preceded by a short vowel, as in A.S. *niht*, night, M.E. *night*, the speakers soon lengthened out the vowel at the expense of the guttural, so that by the year 1400 it had almost disappeared. In the fifteenth century, the vowel was of full length, and the guttural only remained in the written form ; hence the mod. E. *night*. Capgrave, in the fifteenth century, even dropped the *gh* in writing. So also the A.S. *bohte*, he bought, has become *bought*, by the lengthening of the open *o* at the expense of the guttural ; but

¹ Note also the Mod. E. *warlock*, as compared with the M.E. *warloghe* ; and *stickler*, from M.E. *stichtlen*. Compare the A.S. *Ealhmund* with the later *Alkmund*, as seen in the name of St. Alkmund's Church in Shrewsbury ; *Cænwealh* with *Cenwale* (Henry of Huntingdon) ; *Ealhwine* with *Alcuin*.

the guttural became *f* in the Cornish word *boft* (for *boght*). It is not worth while to go through the list; it is only necessary to say that, in almost every case, the vowel-sound is now long and the guttural has vanished. The sole exception, in literary English, is in the word *draught* from M.E. *draht*, in which the guttural was replaced by *f*; whence the occasional spelling *draft*.

The Normans had a difficulty with the A.S. initial *h*. In the cases where the A.S. words began with *hl*, *hn*, or *hr*, they at once ignored the whispered sounds, which they replaced by *l*, *n*, and *r*. And we can hardly doubt that they helped to suppress such awkward sounds as the initial *k* in *know* and *g* in *gnaw*, which were wholly new to them. The number of French words of Frankish origin, such as *hauberk*, in which there was a slight aspirate, was small; and the Latin *h* was of none effect. Hence, in learning English, they at first fell into confusion. The thirteenth-century MSS., such as that of Havelok, show the frequent omission of *h* on the one hand, as in *Auelok* for *Havelok*, *osed* for *hosed*, i.e. furnished with hose; and the insertion of *h* in the wrong place on the other hand, as in *hold* for *old*, *Henglish* for *English*, and the like. I have no doubt that such confusion was at one time common in London, where Normans were numerous; and further, that their English dependants soon learnt to imitate them. But as time went on, the educated classes soon contrived to make the right distinctions, leaving the unlearned in the lurch. This supposition will easily account for the state of things at the present day, when such mispronunciations are commonest amongst the lower orders. The unlearned, when left to themselves, are extremely conservative; and had there been no Norman invasion, there is no reason why they should not have preserved the initial *h* intact, as they had done from prehistoric times to the eleventh century. But they were interfered with and mistaught by their superiors, and had not the faculty of unlearning their mistakes. I would account in a similar way for the confusion between initial *w* and *v*, which in some MSS. is most bewildering. The conflict was one between the A.S. *w* and the French *v*, which must at one time have been much mixed up; and obviously the Normans prevailed when they turned our *wine-yard* into *vine-yard*! But here, again, the educated classes contrived at last to get them right, whilst the lower orders failed to do so. I wish to add here my emphatic testimony to the correctness of Charles Dickens in his description of the talk of Mr. Samuel Weller. It is not at

all exaggerated, as I have often heard said by those who know London only during the last half-century. I remember the dialect of the Pickwickian age sufficiently well to appreciate it; but I should not like to contradict anyone who were to assert that it has changed materially since 1850. For it is notorious that, during the latter half of the last century, the lower orders have received quite as good instruction as the upper classes had in the fourteenth century; so that they likewise now know the correct uses of *v* and *w*.

- I think the Anglo-French scribes were extremely conscientious, and tried to do their best to express sounds phonetically, and even continued to write down sounds long after they had ceased to pronounce them. Perhaps one of the most extraordinary examples of this is in the case of the verb *to write*, in which we still set down an initial *w* which has surely been long extinct. I see no strong reason why this *w* should not have been sounded still, if our language had been let alone; but Anglo-French habits were of course fatal to it.

An extremely interesting case is that of initial *wh*, as still written in *what* and *which*. One of the marks of a Norman scribe is the clearness with which he proclaims that the sound was one which he disliked. The scribe of Havelok commonly uses *hw* for this sound; but he nevertheless writes *wat* for *hwat*, *wan* for *hwan*, *wom* for *hwom*, and the like. I have already remarked that Norman peculiarities were strongest in the South; and the sound now considered exemplifies this theory very clearly. It is in the South that *hw* has become a mere *w*, whilst in the Northumbrian district it is still fairly maintained. The words that require special consideration are the pronouns *who*, *whose*, and *whom*, which gave extraordinary trouble to the Norman. For in this case he was confronted with a further difficulty, due to his dislike of *w* before the vowels *o* and *u*, as explained in my Canon 5. The Norman preferred *'oman* to *woman*, *'ood* to *wood*, and *'olf* to *wolf*; and this is why we all say *oose* for *woose*, from A.S. *wōs*; *so* for *swo*; and *thong* for *thwong*. By changing *hw* into *w* in the M.E. *hwo*, he would have had to deal with a form *wo*, for which he had no great affection; but by retaining the *h*, and using the closer vowel due to the action of the *w*, he obtained a form *hō*, with long close *o*, with which he was satisfied. An early example of this form *hō* occurs in Floriz and Blancheflur, ed. Lumby, l. 634, a poem marked both by Anglo-

French spellings and by examples of Southern grammar. But of course scribes continued to write such forms as *who* and *whom* long after the diverted pronunciation was well established. In fact, they do so still. "It is one of our greatest troubles that the written forms often represent old pronunciations that have been extinct for centuries." This is why such a spelling as *ho* in the thirteenth century is of very great weight and significance.

I suppose that the present pronunciation of *two* without the *w* was due to a similar cause. The spelling *to* occurs in Genesis and Exodus, l. 423, an early text by a Norman scribe.

I now come to a fresh sound altogether, that of the A.S. *ng*, which, as Dr. Sweet shows, had always and everywhere the sound of our *ng* in *finger*, even at the end of a word; a sound which I shall denote by the symbol *ngg*. Final *ngg*, as noted in my Canon 13, was an unacceptable sound to Norman scribes, who were puzzled as to how to write it. This is why we find *kinc* written for *king*, as a reminder that the sound was fully *ngg*, not *ng* merely. Some ingenious scribes invented the spelling *bringhe* to signify the same thing, whilst some wrote *bringge* (Polit. Songs, p. 332, l. 201); but perhaps the best spelling is that so common in the early South-English Legendary, ed. Horstmann, where we find *longue* for *longe*, pronounced *longge*, p. 56, l. 73 (cf. *lonke* for *longe*, Polit. Songs, ed. Wright, p. 156, l. 11); *strongue* for *stronge*, p. 56, l. 83; *bi-guynnningue* for *bi-ginning*, p. 57, l. 139; *bringue* for *bringe*, p. 84, l. 17; and the like. I suppose that the spelling *tongue* goes back to a time when the *ng* was sounded as *ngg*, and that this is what is meant by the final *ue*; cf. O.F. *langue*, and E. *plague*. At any rate, it occurs, spelt *toungue*, in the same text, p. 7, ll. 219, 224; cf. *kingue* in the same, p. 472, l. 339. And note the spelling *tunke*, in O.E. Misc., p. 119, l. 282. There was no difficulty in the sound so long as it occurred medially; but at the end of a word, the temptation to reduce it to the *ng* in *sing* must have been considerable; and I have no doubt that the Norman frequently did this. The result of this weakening of the sound is clear enough in modern English, in which *ngg* has been reduced to *ng* wherever it is final, so that we now pronounce *sing*, *song*, *thing*, *thong*, with the simple *ng*. We have even gone further than this, reducing *ngg* to *ng* in all derivatives of such words, such as *singer*, *songstress*, *bringing*, *wingless*, *ringdove*, *strongly*, and all the rest. It is only retained where it cannot be final, as in *finger*, *linger*, *mingle*, *tingle*, and even in such French words as *single* and *jangle*.

The only exceptions, I believe, to the rule here pointed out, are, that it is also retained in three good old English comparatives and superlatives, viz., *longer*, *stronger*, *younger*, and *longest*, *strongest*, *youngest*; but by no means in the sb. *longing*. I take it to be obvious that *longer* is not a comparative formed from the modern E. *long*, but from the M.E. *longg*. Cf. prov. E. *anythink* for *anything*.

I have further no doubt that, in unaccented final syllables, as in *shilling*, *willing*, the *ng* was often slily reduced to *n*, by all classes of society, the poorer copying their superiors. But here, again, the educated classes at last learnt their lesson, leaving others, as usual, in the lurch. It has frequently been explained that this peculiarity does not consist in "dropping the *g*," as the unphonetic are wont to say, but in the substitution of *n* for *ng*, which is, in itself, a simple elementary sound. In all cases, the sound is preserved before a final *k*, though it is ill represented by writing a mere *n*. We write *think* as an abbreviation for *thinkk*; but it is of no great consequence, as there is no ambiguity.

Another sound which the Normans disliked was that of *lk*, chiefly after the vowels *a* and *o*. We best see this by considering their treatment of the Latin accusative *falcōnem*. Here the *l* was vocalized to *u*, producing the form *faucon*; and, as Mr. Toynbee remarks, "this vocalisation of *l* to *u* is one of the most characteristic phenomena of French phonetics. It was effected at the beginning of the twelfth century." Hence we obtained the M.E. *faucon*, and the modern English *falcon*, in which the restoration of the *l*, in order to be gazed upon, was due to a knowledge of the form of the Latin original. But the point I wish now to bring forward is that the Normans treated English in this respect just as they had treated Latin; and this is why we all pronounce the words *balk*, *chalk*, *talk*, *stalk*, *walk*, with the sound of the *alc* in *falcon*. I do not call this a regular development, but a diverted one. It just makes all the difference. That Englishmen could have had no difficulty in pronouncing the *l* in such a position is seen by comparing such words as *talc* and *balcony* and *calculate*. So also in Germany, nobody drops the *l* in such a word as *Balken* any more than in *Balkon*.

Two more words, ending in *-olk*, were similarly deprived of their *l*, viz. *folk* and *yolk*. These also are instances of diverted development. There is no more difficulty in sounding the *l* in *folk* than there is in saying *polka*; we could quite easily sound it like the German *Volk*. The modern form *each*, M.E. *ēche*,

resulted from the early thirteenth-century *eleh* (O.E. Hom., ii. 29) by lengthening the *e*, and ignoring the inconvenient *l*. So also the M.E. *euerilk* became *eueril* by Norman influence (gloss to Havelok); whence *eueri* and the modern form *every*. *Every* also resulted from the A.F. *āuric* (A.S. Chron.) by dropping the *c*.

As to words in *-alm*, such as *balm*, *calm*, *palm*, *psalm*, the omission of the *l* is correct enough, because they are words of French origin; but it ought to be particularly noted that they have diverted the development of native words, such as *alms* (found in A.S., though of Greek origin), and *qualm*. The development of the A.S. *healm*, O. Mercian *halm*, is most perverse; the modern forms being both *haulm* and *halm*, in neither of which the *l* is sounded! Both pronunciations are French, though the word is native English. This is not regular development, but a proof of a most meddlesome influence. Even more astonishing is the treatment of the native word *holm*, in the sense of island; it has been robbed of its *l* in a manner which can only be rightly characterized as shameless. And we submit to all these alterations as a matter of course; so that, even in the N.E.D., we find no comment on them, but they are accepted as if their phonetic development were perfectly regular! Had this been so, the *l* would have been kept, as in the G. *Holm* and the Icel. *holmr*; we ourselves make no difficulty at all of sounding the *l* in *dolmen*. Equally extraordinary has been the treatment of the A.S. *holegn* or *holen*, which produced no less than three descendants. The regular development gave us *hollin*, an old word for *holly*; the dropping of the *n* gave the modern form *holly*; whilst, in the third place, contraction reduced *holen* to *holn*, remodelled as *holm*, and applied to the *holm-oak*. It then fell under the baneful influence which had already diverted the sound of *holm*, an island, and had to be diverted in the same way. As to *salmon*, the question is different; the *l* is a restored one, and the word is French; the M.E. form was *samoun*, as in Trevisa, i. 369.

Sometimes there are two distinct developments, one English and one French. This seems to apply to words in *-alt*.

On the English side we have *shalt*, with the *a* in *cat*. With this we may compare such a word as *altitude*; and I can certify that I have often heard the Italian word *alto* pronounced with the same vowel. Another such word is *asphalt*, which is not really of French origin, but directly from the Latin form of the Greek word, the oldest spelling being *aspaltoun*.

On the French side we have *cobalt*, *smalt*, *salt*, *exalt*, and the verb *to halt* in the sense of to stop. The native words *halt*, *lame*, and *malt*, have been diverted so as to bring them under the same category. But for Norman influence, they would *always* have rhymed with *shalt*.

The power of Anglo-French influence is especially conspicuous in the case of words ending in *-alf*. The Latin word *saluum* was robbed of its *l* in French, so that it became *sauf*, and was even pronounced *saaf* (as in Wycliffe, Mat. i. 21), whence the mod. E. *safe*. The form *saf* occurs in Godefroy, with a reference to *sauf*, a form which is conspicuous by its absence. We find, however, the A.F. *saver*, to save, in the Year-books of Edw. I, an. 1304-5, ed. A. J. Horwood, 1864, p. 467. It is easy to see that Norman influence has similarly diverted the words *calf* and *half*, with their derivatives *calve* and *halve*; yet we have no difficulty in sounding the *l* in *Balfour*, or that in *valve*. Parallel to the E. *safe* from A.F. *saaf*, O.F. *sauf*, we have the personal name *Ralph* (pron. *Rafe*) from the Latin *Radulphus*, which is itself a derivative from Old High German. The most extreme example of the Norman influence upon the E. *alf* appears in the modern word *halfpenny*, which in our dialects is often a 'haa-peni.'

I think we ought to consider, in this connection, the question of the sound of the initial consonantal *y* in the Middle English period. The fact that a word which appears as *Garn* in German appears as *gearn* in A.S., and as *yarn* in M.E., shows that initial *y*-consonant was a well-known and familiar sound both in the Early and Middle English periods. On the other hand, it is unknown to modern French, except in a few foreign words, with the sole exception of the form *yeux*; and in Old French it is almost equally scarce. The Normans much preferred the sound of *j* or of *g*. An excellent test-word is provided by the words *guild* and *guild-hall*. *Guild* is derived from the A.S. *gild*, a payment, pronounced as *yild*; and there can be no doubt that if the word had been left to itself, it would have given us a form *yild* or *yeld*, the *e* being due (I suppose) to its connection with M.E. *yelden*, to pay. It is a rare word in early M.E.; but the derivative *yelde-halle* occurs in Chaucer's Prologue, l. 370, where MS. C. is the only one that spells it as *yilde*, with *i*. But it was a well-known word in the City Ordinances, which were written in Latin or in Anglo-French; and though it frequently loses its *ld*, it is always spelt with *g* or *gu*, the latter of which shows that the *g* was hard. The

Liber Albus, at p. 19, has the form *Gildhalle* in a Latin document, followed by *Gihaldam* on the same page; observe also *Guyhald*, pp. 23, 35; and *la Guyhalle* at p. 44. In the Liber Custumarum, p. 121, in a document written in Anglo-French, the word *Gilde* occurs five times, in the Ordinances of the Weavers, temp. Edw. I; and we know that the *g* was hard, because "la chambre de la *Guihale*" is mentioned on the same page; whilst at p. 102 we find *Guilhalla*. The evidence seems to me quite clear, that the sound of the initial *y* was diverted into hard *g* by Norman and Latin influence. The prevailing theory, from which I now dissent because I believe it to be needless, is that given in the N.E.D., viz., that "the pronunciation with hard *g* must be due to adoption of, or influence from, the O. Norse *gildi*, guild, guild-feast, banquet, payment, value." I should say that it may very well have been due to Scandinavian influence in a certain sense, viz., to the influence of the Scandinavians who conquered Normandy, learnt French, and came over to England with the Conqueror. Surely it was not the Dane who came straight from Denmark who introduced the spelling with *gu*. Surely *gui* is an A.F. symbol, and a proof that the Normans preferred hard *g* to *y*. They even wrote *guet* and *guilt*, to safeguard the hard sound; cf. *ghastly* and *ghost*.

This seems to me a matter of considerable importance, because it throws further light upon the developments of such words as *gate*, and *give*, and *gift*. The A.S. *geat*, a gate, made the plural *gatu*. gates. Hence, as Mr. Bradley points out, arose two distinct types, viz., *yat* or *yot* from the singular, and *gat* from the plural. In such a case the Norman had a choice, and of course he preferred the hard *g*; and his casting vote settled the question for ever, amongst all educated people. Country folks could, of course, say whatever they pleased. Observe how all this agrees with Mr. Bradley's statement of the facts. "Since the sixteenth century, *gate* has been the sole form in literary English; dialectally the forms with *y* remain in northern and north-midland districts, so far as they have not been displaced by the influence of the literary language; occasionally they are found surviving elsewhere, as in N. Devon and at Banbury." To which I would beg leave to add, that there is a railway station at Symond's *Yat*, in the county of Hereford. As to the famous verb *to give*, see the excellent account by Mr. Bradley in the N.E.D. He shows that the *g* was hard in Northumbrian, but the Midland and Southern dialects preferred initial *y*. He remarks that "Langland has *both* types, well

attested by the alliteration, but Chaucer seems to have always written *yere*, *yaf*, and throughout the greater part of the fifteenth century, the palatal forms predominate in Midland (including East Anglian) as well as in Southern writers. The MSS. of Fortescue have hard *g*, which is common also in the London documents after 1430." We have here the singular phenomenon of the apparent prevalence of the Northumbrian pronunciation over that of the Midland and Southern dialects combined, although it is admitted that modern English is not mainly a Northumbrian dialect. The word, it must be remembered, is one of the commonest in the language. It seems to me that we have here also a case in which the preference of the Norman for hard *g* heavily influenced the votes in its favour. The fact that the form with *g* prevailed in London spelling in 1430 shows that it must already have been prevalent there in the preceding century; and, indeed, Langland wrote mainly for a London audience. It is very curious to find that the authority of Chaucer (or of his scribes) was overruled in the matter of the pronunciations both of *guild-hall* and of *give*. Perhaps it adds weight to the inference which we may fairly draw from his rhymes, that he preferred the archaic forms which he had learnt in his youth, and rebelled against all neologistic tendencies. I suspect that Langland's preferences led him in the opposite direction.

I need not discuss the word *gift*. It prevailed over the Midland and Southern *gift* by help of the combined influences of Northumbrian and Anglo-French.

But it is well worth while to consider the words *again* and *against*, though it will suffice to discuss the former only; for they obviously go together as relates to the *g*, though *again* is the older word.

The history is much the same as before. We are confronted with the fact that the form *ayein* (with *y*) prevailed at first not only in the Southern dialect, but in the dominant Midland; the form with hard *g* being Northumbrian only. In the Ormulum we have *onnyen*, with the symbol for *y*. Both texts of Wycliffe's Bible have *ayein* (with the symbol for *y*) in Matt. ii. 12, and elsewhere. In short, it is difficult to find the exclusive spelling with *g* in early M.E. texts at all, unless we look into Northumbrian texts, such as the Cursor Mundi or Hampole's Pricke of Conscience. The MSS. of Chaucer and Langland show both forms, and so decide nothing. My belief is, accordingly, that there was a choice

of forms; and that the Normans, who were the better educated, gave the casting vote in favour of the hard *g*.

The number of words in which there was a choice between hard *g* and *y* was very small. Nothing need be said as to words like *year*, *young*, *ye*, and *yoke*, which began with *y* in all dialects. The word *yard*, in the sense of 'court,' answers to the Northern *garth*; and the final sounds kept them distinct. The Northern form *garn*, answering to the Southern *yarn*, is not recorded before 1483. The dislike of the Normans to initial *y* easily explains the modern *Ipswich*, from A.S. *Gipeswio*. So also E. *itch* is from M.E. *yicchen*; and *icicle* is for *ice-(y)ikel*. The A.S. prefix *ge-* was similarly reduced, not to *yi-*, but to the simple vowel *i-*, even in a word like *hand-i-work*. Cf. *hal-i-mote*.

I beg leave to make the suggestion, for what it is worth, that the past tenses ending in *-einte*, and past participles ending in *-eint*, from verbs ending in *-engen*, *-enken*, or *-enchen*, were practically a Norman invention. That is to say, they treated such words just as O. French had treated Latin. The Lat. *sanctus* became O.F. *seint*, E. *saint*; the Lat. *plancta* became O.F. *plainte*, E. *plaint*; the Lat. *tinctus* became O.F. *teint*, whence E. *taint*, and so on. The point is, that such a development is peculiarly French, and depends on the development of the *yod* before a *c* in the combination *ct*: see Toynbee's Hist. F. Grammar, §§ 34, 129. The result is that *-enkte* would become *-einte*; and *-engte* or *-enchte*, passing into or altered into *-enkte*, would become *-einte* likewise. The chief examples are: (1) *blenken*, pt. t. *blenk-te* or *bleinte* (see Stratmann); (2) *clenchen*, p.p. *cleint* (Stratmann); (3) *drenchen*, pt. t. *dreng-te*, in Layamon, also *dreinte*; (4) *mengen*, pt. t. *mengde*, whence the p.p. *y-meind* or *y-meint* in Chaucer, C.T., A 2170; (5) *prengen*, pt. t. *preinte*, in P. Plowman; (6) *quenchen*, pt. t. *cwenchte*, in S. Juliana, also *queinte*, with the p.p. *queint* in Chaucer, C.T., A 2321; (7) *senchen*, p.p. *seint* (Stratmann); (8) *slengen*, p.p. *sleint* (Stratmann); (9) *sprengen*, pt. t. *sprengde* or *spreinde*, p.p. *y-spreind* or *y-spreint*, in Chaucer, C.T., A 2169; (10) *swenchen*, pt. t. *swencte*, O.E. Homilies, i, 101, last line, p.p. *sweint*, Chaucer, Ho. Fame, 1783; (11) *wrenchen*, p.p. *wreint*, Polit. Songs, ed. Wright, p. 157, l. 2. I cannot believe that these very strange forms can possibly be explained as being purely English developments; the characteristic change of *e* to *ei* before *not* is obviously French. At the same time, I would explain the change from *cht* to *ct* precisely as Mr. Wyld does at p. 247 of his article.

The E. sounds of *ng* and *nk* were certainly disliked by the Normans, especially when final or followed by another consonant. The fact that they preferred final *nt* to *nd* (Canon 12) explains the change from *meind*, *spreind* to *meint* and *spreint*.

A few words as to *sh*. The sound of *sh* was a new one to the invaders, and we have already seen that they sometimes wrote *sch* for *ch*, showing confusion between *sh* and *ch*. Dr. Furnivall, Temporary Pref., p. 57, quotes from MS. C. the following: 195 *schyn*, chin; 475 *schaunce*, chance; 1400 *schaunged*, changed; 2055 *schastite*, chastity; 2109 *schosyn*, chosen; 2760 *scherche*, church; 2809 *schaungede*, changed. Surely this explains one curious instance in which the confusion of *ch* and *sh* was so complete that the wrong form is the only one now in use. All that Dr. Murray says of the word CHIVER is, that it is the obsolete form of *Shiver*, which is perfectly correct. The M.E. *chiveren* is precisely the E. *shiver*, in the sense of shudder or quake; and it is very remarkable that the form ultimately adopted was the very one which must have been, at the outset, the harder one for a Norman to pronounce. But the fact is that the sound was one which they soon acquired; and they were so proud, as it would appear, of the acquisition that they actually introduced it into a whole set of French verbs, in which they substituted it for the sound of their own *ss*, as I have shown in my "Principles of Eng. Etymology," series ii, p. 124. Thus, from the stem *floriss-* of the O.F. *florir*, they evolved the M.E. *florisshe*, to flourish; and to keep company with it, they conferred upon us the verbs *accomplish*, *banish*, *blandish*, and at least eighteen more. Not content with this, they turned the A.F. *amenuser*, M.E. *menusen*, into *minish*; the A.F. *amonester*, M.E. *amonesten*, into *amonish*, later *admonish*; and coined a new form *astonish* as a variant of *astonien*. More than this, *ss* also became *sh* in *anguish*, *bushel*, *push*, *quash*, *usher*; and I add some more examples of a like kind. It is remarkable, surely, to find the spelling *parich* (like A.F. *paroch*) in MS. C. only, where all the other MSS. have *parisshe* or *parische*, more like modern English; see Chaucer, C.T., A 449. In l. 491, MS. C. has *parysch* with a *o* and without final *e*, where all the rest agree in writing *parisshe*.

I strongly suspect it was Norman influence which turned the M.E. *binden* (with short *i*) into *bind*, and the M.E. *bunden* (with short *u*) into *bounden*. A similar vowel-lengthening occurs in *child*, from A.S. *cild*; cf. also *mild* and *wild*. Of this, however, I have

little proof; and it may be said that this was a natural development. Still the fact remains that both Dutch and German have *binden*, with the Du. p.p. *gebonden* and the G. p.p. *gebunden*; whilst we have from French sources such forms as *laund* and *lawn*, *abound*, *confound*, and *expound*; and even *sound* from Lat. *sonum*. A straw may show which way the wind blows; and such a straw perhaps exists in the case of the word *guild-hall*, in which we have resisted the Norman attempt to make us lengthen the vowel-sound. Yet they achieved something, for there is a *Guild Hall* at East Dereham, in Norfolk, in the name of which, to my knowledge, the *Guild* rhymes with *child*. We have similarly resisted the same influence, even more successfully, in the case of the verb *to build*, the history of which is not a little remarkable; for the spelling with *ui* is not explained, even in the N.E.D. The story is as follows:—

The symbol *ui* (or its equivalent *uy*) was employed by Southern scribes of the thirteenth century to represent the sound resulting from the A.S. long *y*, as in *fȳr*. See Sweet's First Middle English Primer, p. 3. An example in the Ancoren Riwele is *huire*, hire, and the symbol was at first not very common; but Robert of Gloucester has *fuir*, fire, *pruyde*, pride, *cuythe*, to make known, and *muynde*, mind. The last example is important, because it does not represent an original long *y*, but a short *y* that has been lengthened. In Horstmann's Early South English Legendary the symbol is in full use; examples are *fuyr*, fire, p. 2, l. 45; *pruyde*, pride, p. 13, l. 424; *kuyn*, kine, p. 351, l. 221; *huyde*, to hide, p. 85, l. 71; etc. We find *buylden* even in Chaucer, C.T., D 1977, in the Ellesmere MS., and in P. Plowman; whilst the vowel-length is further indicated by *bielde*, Gen. xi. 8 (B-text), and *beeldide*, 3 Kings, xi. 7 (A-text) in Wycliffe's Bible. Hence the precise meaning of the *ui* in the spelling *build* was to indicate vowel-length, so that the regular modern E. form would have rhymed with *child*. The vowel, however, was ultimately shortened because the pt. t. and p.p. *builded* or *built* often had a short vowel in early times; thus the pt. t. is simply *bulde* in the S.E. Legendary, p. 9, l. 276 (cf. *hid* as the pt. t. of *hide*); the preservation of *ui* in the modern form is, of course, absurd, especially in the pt. t. and p.p. Cf. *bielde*, sb., in the E.D.D.

Similarly, the modern E. *bruise* owes its spelling to the M.E. *bruyen*; and the pt. t. *to-bruysde* in the S.E. Legendary, p. 295, l. 58, shows the derivation from A.S. *tō-brȳsan*, with a long *y*; but the modern pronunciation is probably due to confusion with

O.F. *bruiser*. The only other modern word that preserves this symbol is the verb *to buy*, in which the 3 p. s. pr. *buyeth* answers to M.E. *bȳ-eth*, A.S. *bug-eth*; i.e. the *uy* represents the long *y* from A.S. *ug*.

Another noteworthy word in the S.E. Legendary, p. 62, l. 309, is the sb. *buyle*, a boil, from A.S. *bȳl*; of which the modern form ought to be *bile*. It is obvious that it was Norman influence which diverted it into the French form *boil*, by confusion with a verb with which it has nothing to do. And the Normans were only able, in this case, to influence the literary language; the lower orders stuck faithfully to the native form *bile*.

The point which I am chiefly anxious to establish is that Norman influence will fairly, and in some cases demonstrably, account for diverted and non-phonetic developments; and on this account, I think the possibility of such influence ought certainly to be considered in all cases where the development is non-phonological or irregular. I cite a few possible examples.

It has often been suggested that the modern E. *bat*, as the name of an animal, is a modification of the M.E. *bakke*. If so, the change from *k* to *t* is due to imperfect imitation, just such as a Norman would resort to when failing to appreciate the English sound correctly. Captain Cook tells us that the natives of islands in the South Seas often called him *Tuti*.

There can be no doubt that the correct form of *cuttle-fish* would have been *cuddle-fish*, from A.S. *cudele*; the Prompt. Parv. has both *codul* and *cotul*, at p. 96. The Cornish dialect, remote from literary influence, still has *oodle* or *cuddle*. I would explain *cuttle* as a diverted form, due to imperfect imitation, first uttered by some Norman who had learnt a good deal of English, and was bent upon learning more.

The adj. *swarthy* is a barbarous formation. Schmidt's Shakespeare Lexicon gives references for *swart* and *swarth*, *swarty* and *swarthy*. *Swart* and *swarty* are perfectly correct; but *swarth* and *swarthy* have very much the appearance of having been coined by some Norman who was so proud of having achieved the true E. *th* that he must needs introduce it in the wrong place.

I believe that *sneeze* and *snore* are merely very good imitations of the old forms *fnœene* and *fnore*. The substitution of *sn* for the very difficult *fn* is almost commendable. But it is a phonetic loss, being less descriptive.

I know of no satisfactory explanation of the word *lath*, which

is due to the M.E. *latthe* (= *lath-the*) as a substitute for the true form *latte*. Can it have been created by a too zealous learner of English, or is W. *lath* (Stokes-Fick, p. 319) a Celtic word?

In some cases where there was a choice of forms, as between *sp* and *ps*, it cannot be doubted that a Norman would vote for *sp* as being the easier sound. And in fact, we say *aspen* rather than *apsen*; *clasp*, and not *claps*; *grasp*, and not *graps*; *lisp*, not *lips*; *hasp*, not *haps*. *Wasp* (cf. O.F. *guespe*) is the elegant and literary form, whilst *waps* is favoured by the speakers of dialect.

CANONS FOR DETECTING ANGLO-FRENCH SPELLINGS OF ENGLISH WORDS.

1. Misuse of initial *h*; as *Auelok* for *Hauelok*, and *hende* for *ende*.
2. Misuse of *s* for *sh*; as *same* for *shame*. Occasional confusion of *sch* and *ch*.
3. Use of *t* or *d* in place of E. *th*.
4. Use of *w* (or *uw*) for *wh* or *hw*.
5. Use of *u* (or *w*) for *wu* (*wo*); as in *ulf* for *wolf*, *wman* for *woman*. Use of *uu* for A.S. *w*.
6. Loss of initial *y*; as in *ou* for *you*.
7. Use of *re* (*ru*) for *r*; as in *coren*, *arum*, for *corn*, *arm*.
8. Use of *g* for *gh*; as in *thurg* for *thurgh*.
9. Use of *st*, *ct*, *gt*, *cht*, *t*, or *th* for *ght*, when final.
10. Use of *l* for final *ld*; as in *gol* for *gold*.
11. Use of *il* or *ilek* for *ilk*.
12. Loss of final *d* or *t*, as in *an* for *and*, *ef* for *eft*, *bes* for *best*; and use of *ant* for *and*.
13. Use of *ng* or *nh* for *nk*, and *no* (*nk*) for *ng*; also *n* or *ngue* for *ng*.
14. Use of *th* for *t*, initially and finally.
15. Use of *t* for voiceless *th*, and *d* for voiced *th*; and sometimes *d* for either of them.
16. Use of *z* for *ts*, and of *ce* for *tse*.

N.B.—We sometimes find in such texts an extraordinary misuse of the A.S. symbols for *w*, *th*, and consonantal *y*, which replace one another; so that a word which is spelt *thith* (*þiþ*) is meant for *with* (*piþ*), and *yise* (*ȝise*) means *wise* (*pise*).

LISTS OF NORMANISED MIDDLE ENGLISH TEXTS.

There are practically two sets of MSS. with Anglo-French peculiarities. In the former these characteristics are so evident that they cannot be ignored by students who wish to understand the spelling. In the latter they are less frequent, but can easily be discovered by those who search for them. Most of those in the former class are in the Southern or East Midland dialect. The Southern dialect was doubtless most affected, in accordance with the fact that it most readily admitted French words into its vocabulary. The lists are probably not exhaustive.

A. The following texts are rather strongly marked by peculiarities of Anglo-French spelling :—

Old English Homilies, series i; ed. Morris, 1868 (E.E.T.S.). In Southern dialect. It is singular that the editor makes no remarks upon the extraordinary spellings, which are abundant. Thus, in the first twenty lines, we find *his* for *is*; *is* for *his*; *oped* (*sic*) for *cwed* = *oweth*; *god* for *goth*; *seid* for *seith*; *finded* for *findeth*; so also *unbinded*, *leaded*, *haued*, *leted*; *huppon* for *upon*; *seodþan* for *seoðþan*; *cut* for *cuth*; *strehiten* for *streihiten*. The deviations from normal spelling may be counted by hundreds.

Genesis and Exodus; ed. Morris, 1865 (E.E.T.S.). In East Midland dialect.

The Bestiary; in *O. Eng. Miscellany*, ed. Morris, 1872 (E.E.T.S.). In East Midland dialect.

Old Kentish Sermons; in the same, p. 26.

The Proverbs of Alfred, Text ii; in the same, p. 103. Apparently East Midland, but inclining to Southern. Very strongly marked.

A Song to the Virgin; in the same, p. 194. Has *wis* for *with*, 14; *sad* for *shad* (*shed*), 15: cf. ll. 24, 26, 42, 44.

A Song on the Passion; in the same, p. 197. See ll. 2, 4, 6, 14, 20, 24, 29, 34, 41, 43, 47, 48, 61, 64, 72, 76, 79.

The Debate of the Body and the Soul; in *Poems of W. Mapes*, ed. Wright (Camden Soc.), 1841, p. 334, and in Mätzner, *Sprachproben*, i, 90. The A.F. spellings are not numerous, but some are extraordinary, as *zwi* for *hwi*, 23; *wurdlī* for *worldī*, 33; *fleys* for *fleisch*, 45; *suwelle* for *swells*, 45; *thouȝ* for *thou*, 60; *pid* for *pith*, 75; etc.

Dame Siriz; in Wright's *Anecdota Literaria*, 1844, p. 1; and in Mätzner, *Sprachproben*, i, 103.

Reliquiæ Antiquiæ, ed. Wright and Halliwell; 2 vols., 1841. In vol. i may be noted—Early English Prayers, p. 22; The Five Joys of the Virgin, p. 48; A Hymn to the Virgin, p. 89; Hymns and Ballads, p. 100; Names of the Hare (slightly marked, being short), p. 133; Judas, p. 144; Proverbs of Alfred (already mentioned), p. 170; The Thrush and the Nightingale, p. 241 (*nokut*, nought, *wi*, why. N.B. Incorrectly printed; thus, *semeth* at p. 244, l. 8 from bottom, should be *geineth*, and *some*, l. 8 from end, should be *sone*); Songs of a Prisoner, p. 274; The Creed, p. 282. In vol. ii may be noted—Poetical Scraps, p. 119; Satire on Kildare, p. 174; (perhaps) A Lullaby, p. 177; certainly The Vox and the Wolf (Southern), p. 272.

Havelok the Dane, ed. Skeat, 1868 (E.E.T.S., Extra Series).

B. The following texts also contain occasional notable spellings.

It is not always easy to draw the line. Some Southern texts have the A.F. spelling *ant* for *and*, but very little else that calls for remark; they are not here mentioned.

A.S. Chronicle (Laud MS.). The latest hand (1132–1154) frequently has French spellings. Thus, on a single page (p. 264) of Plummer's edition, we find *uu* for *w*; *nowider* for *no-hwider*; *thusen* for *thusend*; *wile* for *hwile* (twice). Even the first hand (down to 1121) has a few traces of such; e.g. *breket* for *breketh*, p. 37, l. 3 from bottom; and actually *foces* for *folces* in the next line. And now we say *foks's*. Note also that *sop* has been corrected to *scop* (shope, shaped) on p. 41, l. 2; and *heol* to *heold* (held), p. 45, l. 4 from bottom. It has already been explained that *s* for *sh*, and final *l* for final *ld*, express Norman pronunciations.

Layamon; later text. E.g. *sipes* for *shipes* (ships); see *Specimens of English*, ed. Morris, p. 65, l. 7; *solle* for *sholle*, l. 48; *wat* for *what*, l. 53; *wanene* for *whanene*, l. 54; *solde* for *sholde*, 90; *sams* (shame), 171; *sal* (shall), 180; *sipe* (ship), 184; *hin* (inn), 262; etc. The older text is correct. The traces are not numerous; but this is a reason for being the more upon our guard, and a correct understanding of the matter assists emendation. Thus, at l. 349, the word *i-veipēd* has been misunderstood; for, indeed, there is no such word. A knowledge of the fact that the Norman scribes confused the A.S. symbols for *w*, *y*, and *th*, enables us to correct the reading to *i-veijēd*, which is a correct variant of *i-uaid* in the older text. See *I-vee* in the N.E.D.

Old English Homilies, series ii; ed. Morris, 1873 (E.E.T.S.). The A.F. spellings are much less numerous than in Series i.

A Moral Ode. Some of the texts exhibit a few A.F. spellings. So also some of the poems in Morris's O.E. Miscellany, at pp. 37, 72, 147.

Seinte Marharete, ed. Cockayne, 1866 (E.E.T.S.). The text at p. 1 is only slightly affected, but that which begins at p. 34 has numerous examples.

Early English Poems and Lives of Saints, ed. Furnivall (Phil. Soc.), 1862. Pieces i-vii and xxxii-xxxvi, from MS. Harl. 913, have a few slight traces of A.F. spelling. Thus *sal* for *shal* (shall) is common, but by no means indicates a Northern dialect. Note *wringit* for *wringeth*, p. 3, st. 20; and *sal*, st. 23. Piece viii is a copy of the Moral Ode, from the Egerton MS. 613; it has *think* for *thineth*, st. 3; *det* for *deth* (doth), st. 10. Pieces ix-xxiv, from MS. Harl. 2277, are but slightly affected. See *sorinyashe* for *sorinesse*, p. 40, l. 16; *purf* for *thurgh*, p. 45, l. 94; etc.

Political Songs, ed. Wright (Camden Soc.), 1839. Some of the poems are very slightly affected by A.F. usages; see The King of Almaigne, p. 69 (*ant* for *and*, *kyn* for *kyng*, *dryng* for *drynk*); A Satyre, p. 155 (*ant* for *and*, *lonke* for *longe*, p. 156, *whissheth* for *wissheth* at p. 159); The Flemish Insurrection, p. 187 (*statuz* for *statute*, p. 188, l. 6; *ritht*, p. 191, l. 7; *swyers* for *swoyers*, l. 15; *noud* for *not*, p. 192, l. 14; *is* for *his*, p. 193, l. 10), etc.; Evil Times of Edward II, p. 323 (*wid* for *with*, p. 324, 18, and in several other places; *cares* in l. 159, but *cometh* in l. 160; *theih* for *they*, 194; *bringge*, 201; *inohw*, 229).

Cursor Mundi, ed. Morris (E.E.T.S.). It is a remarkable fact that in this Northumbrian poem, three out of the four MSS. (viz. the three first) all show occasional traces of A.F. spelling; the fourth is perhaps wholly free from them. See *wit*, with, 16, 30, 57; *vers*, worse, 38; *wyður*, whither, 64; *blisce*, bless, 69; *herth*, earth, 71. In l. 80, *fless* (flesh) is the right Northumbrian form, as it rhymes with *less*; note that the Trin. MS. has *flesshe*, which is Southern.

Owl and Nightingale, ed. Wright (Percy Soc.), 1843; ed. Stratmann, 1868. I refer to the extract in Morris's Specimens, p. 171. The traces of A.F. spelling are very slight. Observe *wile*, while, 6; *wit*, with, 56; *lodlich*, loathly, 71; *amon*, among, 164; *wit-ute*, without, 183; *wat*, what, 185; etc.

A few similar occasional traces of A.F. spelling may likewise

be found in King Horn and Floriz and Blancheflour, ed. Lumby, 1866 (E.E.T.S.); Robert of Gloucester, ed. W. Aldis Wright; Shoreham's Poems (Kentish); William of Palerne, ed. Skeat (E.E.T.S.); Anturs of Arthure, ed. Robson (Camden Soc.), 1842 (*hurles*, earls, *hernestely*, earnestly, p. 2, l. 13); a few poems in Weber's Collection, viz., Sir Cleges, Lay le Freine, Octovian; some in Ritson's Romances, viz., Launfal, Lybeaus Disconus, Emarè, and A Chronicle of England; and The Proverbs of Hendyng, in Specimens of English, part ii, by Morris and Skeat. It is, of course, to be particularly noted that some of the A.F. misspellings obtained great and long-lasting vogue, and appear in unlikely places, even in copies made in the fifteenth century.

POSTSCRIPT.

I have only given a fragmentary outline of a theme that deserves further development, and many illustrations have naturally been overlooked.

Thus, when I say (at p. 4) that "the *th* was, to the Norman, a difficult sound," it is easy to object that such words as *faith*, *dainteth*, *poortith* are of Norman origin. Yet this would seem to be not quite certain. If the A.F. *feit* or *feid* (both in the Chanson de Roland) was pronounced *feith*, it is clear that the sound was scarce, since there was no symbol for it. In English, *feith* appears in Genesis and Exodus, and *fei* in the S.E. Legendary, which are not far apart. I suspect that the reason why *faith* became the established form in English is that *-th* is a recognized suffix of abstract substantives, and thus *faith* fell into line with *sooth* and *truth*. The same fact may have suggested *dainteth* and *poortith*; the oldest quotation for *dainteth* is later than that for *dainty*. Surely *wealth* is much later than *weal*; and the form *depth* is no earlier than Wyclif. It behoves us to be wary.

I have noted above, at p. 11, that the M.E. *dwerk* appears as well as *dwerf*. Perhaps this apparent interchange of *k* with *f* may explain the far more surprising form *oxspring* (= *ok-spring*), which occurs instead of *ofspring* in the Cursor Mundi.

At p. 21 I have noted the difficulty which the Norman scribes had with the initial *y*-consonant. A curious instance of this occurs in the Cambridge Borough Charters, p. 6, in a charter dated 1201. The scribe is writing in Latin, and has to introduce the M.E. word *yeres-yive*, an annual present or new year's gift. The spelling which he adopts is *iherescheve*. In the same line we find *scothale*, signifying *scot-ale*.

I have to suggest, further, that Latin was freely used in Norman times, especially in charters and legal documents; and that this Latin was spoken as well as written. We must therefore take into account the possible influence of the sounds of medieval Latin, as well as of Anglo-French. In the case of *gilda*, which appears earlier than M.E. *gilde*, this consideration is obviously of importance. Yet no one seems to have thought of this.

The word *to ask* affords a curious example. Dr. Murray shows that there were three developments of the A.S. *āscian*, viz., (1) *ash*, the right etymological form, which is actually obsolete; (2) *ask*, the literary form; and (3) *ax*, which is provincial. The form *ax* is from A.S. *āxian*, variant of *āscian*; but the common literary form *ask* is not easy to explain. Perhaps the Normans used *asken* as a by-form of *axen*, just as they seem to have preferred *hasp* to *haps*, and *wasp* to *waps*.

Many similar riddles still await solution.

FOUR ETYMOLOGIES.

[Also read at the Meeting on May 3, 1901.]

Flue (of a chimney). Perhaps of Dutch origin. Calisch has: "*vloei-pijp*, a ventilating shaft"; from Du. *vloeijen*, to flow, which Franck connects with E. *flow*. That it was confused with L. *fluere* is by no means improbable, as suggested by the spelling. Caxton introduced the verb *to flue*, to allow ink to run; and Sewel has: "*het papier vloeit*, the paper blots, the ink sinks through." This also seems to be really of Dutch origin, though probably confused with O.F. *fluor*, L. *fluere*, to which this verb is referred in the New Eng. Dict.

Gauren, to stare at, gaze upon. This word occurs in Chaucer, and is explained in the N.E.D. But the etymology is not

established. If we remember that the A.S. *dragan* is now *to draw*, we can easily see that *gauren* has resulted, regularly, from the Norw. *gagra*, given by Ross as meaning "to stand with one's neck straight and with one's chin in the air," i.e. in an attitude of gaping wonderment. This *gagra* is the frequentative of *gaga*, to bend the head backward, from *gag*, adj., bent backward, Icel. *gagr* (the same). Cf. Icel. *gag-háls*, with the head bent back.

Proffer. The verb *to proffer* is usually derived from the M.F. *proferer*, to produce, to deliver; see Cotgrave. And this is from the Lat. *prōferre*, to bring forth. But a reference to the Glossary to Bozon, Les Contes Moralises, suggests a different origin. It is there equivalent to the O.F. *profrer*, which is to be connected with the O.F. *profre*, an offer, and the verb *proffrir*, to offer or present; which gives a much more satisfactory sense. A reference to Godefroy's Dictionary shows that the sb. *profre* is a contraction of *porofre*, and the verb *proffrir* of *porofrir*. Thus the ultimate source is not the Lat. *prō* as prefixed to *ferre*, to bear, but the same Lat. *prō* as prefixed to *offerre*, to offer. This explains at once the great similarity in sense between the verbs *to proffer* and *to offer*.

Purpoint, Pourpoint, a doublet. The etymology is correctly given in the Cent. Dict.; from O.F. *pourpoint*, late L. *perpunctum*, a quilted garment; the O.F. *pour* having been substituted for O.F. *par*. I write this note merely for the sake of introducing a highly important reference, as follows:—"Tunica etiam linea multiplici consuta, lineis interioribus difficile penetrando, acu operante artificialiter implicitis—unde et vulgo perpunctum (*al. parpunctum*) nuncupatur."—Itinerarium Regis Ricardi (Primi), ed. Stubbs, i. 99.

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